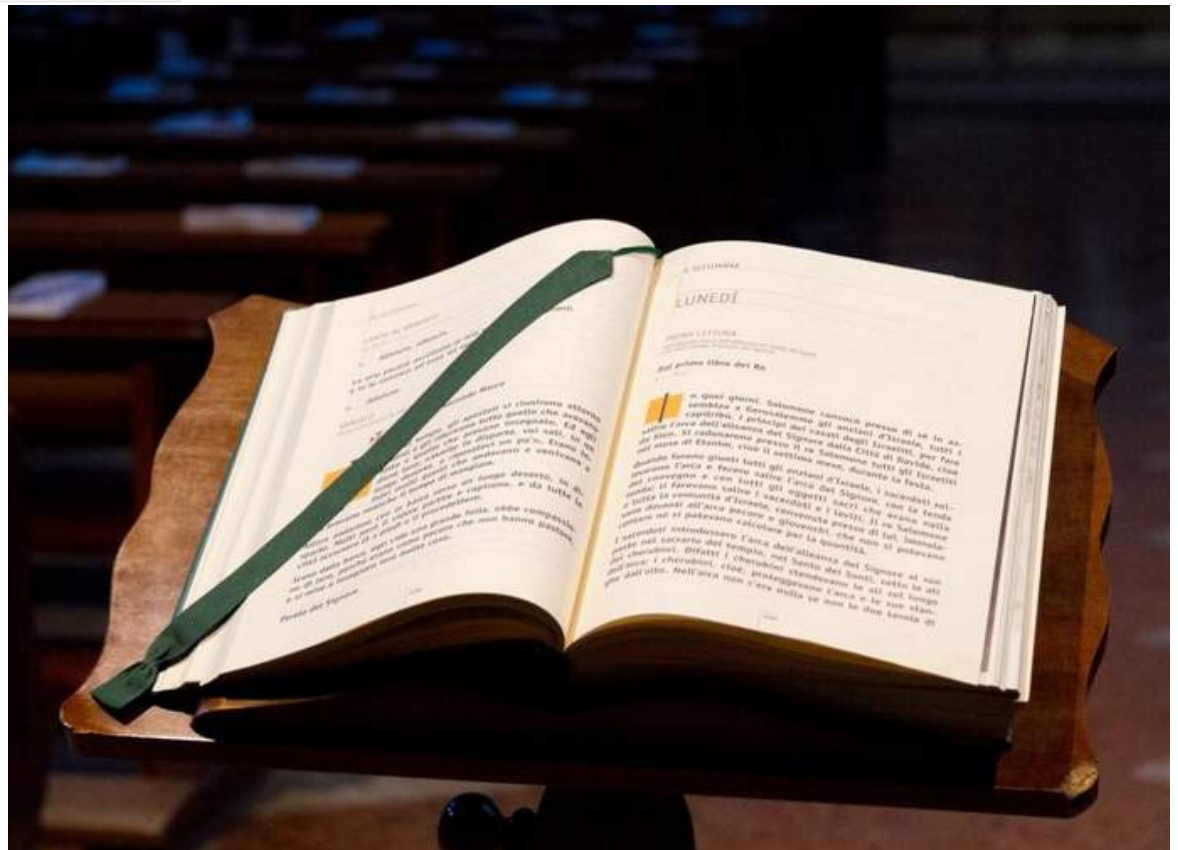


GOSPEL PEARLS

The false promise of heaven on earth

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Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst." Then he said to his disciples, "The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. People will tell you, 'There he is!' or 'Here he is!' Do not go running off after them. For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other. But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this

generation. (Luke 17: 20-25)

In addition to the end of the material world, there will also be the end of our personal world, that is, on the day we die. Until then, the existence of the Kingdom of Heaven will not have been known directly by us. During our earthly lives, therefore, we must remain vigilant and distrustful of ideologies and men who promise any kind of heaven on earth. As Christians, we know well that even the most prosperous of human societies pale in comparison to our eternal lives in paradise.